AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-38 (cancelled).

Claim 39 (currently amended): A method for facilitating food service management in a health care facility, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a computer-based system;

establishing a standard set of therapeutic diet types contained in a master diet type database in said system;

storing a plurality of food recipes in said system within a recipe database;

obtaining nutritional data on each food item used in said plurality of recipes and storing said data in said system within a food item database;

evaluating a nutritional content of each food item;

verifying a nutritional value of each of said plurality of recipes in said recipe database;

assigning various food attributes to said recipes based upon said verified nutritional values;

shaping menu sets of said recipes for each of said established therapeutic diet types in a menu database in said system based upon said assigned food attributes;

providing a remote link to food service professionals associated with said healthcare facility to access said system;

collecting information from said ~~registered~~ food service professionals;

suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals ~~based upon therapeutic diet types selected by said registered food service professionals~~;

making nutritional information associated with said menu sets available to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals; and

tracking an inventory of food items at said health care facility.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of categorizing said plurality of recipes according to geographic regions having noticeable differences in food tastes.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of eliminating variances in said therapeutic diet types among differing health care facilities.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of evaluating diabetic exchange rates of each food item.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The method of claim 42, wherein said verification of nutritional value of each of said plurality of recipes is based upon said evaluation of nutritional content and said evaluation of diabetic exchange rates of each food item.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of forming a large library of menu sets in said menu database.

Claim 45 (currently amended): The method of claim 44, further comprising the step of allowing said ~~registered~~ food service professionals to choose a set of menus from said library.

Claim 46 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals based upon said inventory of food items at said healthcare facility.

Claim 47 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals based upon an individual patient's preference.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The method of claim 47, wherein said patient's preference is based upon said patient's particular food tastes.

Claim 49 (previously presented): The method of claim 47, wherein said patient's preference is based upon said patient's religious beliefs.

Claim 50 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of storing said information collected from said ~~registered~~ food service professionals in said system in a user database.

Claim 51 (previously presented): The method of claim 50, wherein said stored information in said user database includes identifying information.

Claim 52 (currently amended): The method of claim 50, wherein said stored information in said user database includes historical information on prior use of said system by said ~~registered~~ food service professionals.

Claim 53 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of limiting access to said system to food service professionals associated with a healthcare facility.

Claim 54 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of authorizing at least one food service professional associated with a healthcare facility to receive information.

Claim 55 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of allowing said ~~registered~~ food service professionals to place food item orders via said system.

Claim 56 (previously presented): The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of automatically updating said inventory to reflect said orders.

Claim 57 (currently amended): The method of claim 55, wherein said ~~registered~~ food service professionals can place food item orders with a plurality of food item distributors.

Claim 58 (currently amended): The method of claim 57, further comprising the step of providing a standard format for order transactions such that said ~~registered~~ food service professionals can make objective decisions about placing said orders.

Claim 59 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of providing said ~~registered~~ food service professionals the ability to interact with a system proprietor.

Claim 60 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of providing said ~~registered~~ food service professionals the ability to interact with

other food service professionals associated with other healthcare facilities.

Claim 61 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of providing a search engine such that said ~~registered~~ food service professionals can search said databases.

Claim 62 (currently amended): A system for facilitating food service management in a healthcare facility, said system comprising:

a data storage device comprising:

a master diet type database containing a standard set of therapeutic diet types;

a recipe database containing a plurality of food recipes;

a food item database containing nutritional data on each food item used in said plurality of recipes; and

a menu database containing menu sets shaped for each of said therapeutic diet types;

a computer-implemented arrangement for obtaining said nutritional data;

a computer-implemented arrangement for evaluating a nutritional content of each food item;

a computer-implemented arrangement for verifying a nutritional value of each of said plurality of recipes in said recipe database;

a computer-implemented arrangement for assigning various food attributes to said recipes based upon said verified nutritional values;

a computer-implemented arrangement for shaping said menu sets based upon said assigned food attributes of said recipes;

means for providing a remote link to food service professionals associated with said healthcare facility to access the system;

a computer-implemented arrangement for collecting information from said ~~registered~~ food service professionals;

a computer-implemented arrangement for suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals ~~based upon therapeutic diet types selected by said registered food service professionals~~;

a computer-implemented arrangement for making nutritional information associated with said menu sets available to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals; and

a computer-implemented arrangement for tracking an inventory of food items at said healthcare facility.

Claim 63 (previously presented): The system of claim 62, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for categorizing said plurality of recipes according to geographic regions having noticeable differences in food tastes.

Claim 64 (previously presented): The system of claim 62, wherein said menu database contains a large library of completed menu sets.

Claim 65 (currently amended): The system of claim 64, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for allowing said ~~registered~~ food service professionals to choose a set of menus from said library.

Claim 66 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals based upon said inventory of food items at said healthcare facility.

Claim 67 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals based upon an individual patient's preference.

Claim 68 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, wherein said data storage device further comprises a user database containing information collected from said ~~registered~~ food service professionals.

Claim 69 (previously presented): The system of claim 62, wherein access to the system is limited to food service professionals associated with a healthcare facility.

Claim 70 (previously presented): The system of claim 62, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for authorizing at least one food service professional associated with a healthcare facility to receive information.

Claim 71 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for processing food order transactions placed in the system by said ~~registered~~ food service professionals.

Claim 72 (previously presented): The system of claim 71, further comprising a computer-implemented arrangement for automatically updating said inventory to reflect said food order transactions.

Claim 73 (currently amended): The system of claim 71, wherein said ~~registered~~ food service professionals can place orders with a plurality of food item distributors.

Claim 74 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, wherein said ~~registered~~ food service professionals are able to interact with a system proprietor or with other food service professionals associated with other healthcare facilities.

Claim 75 (currently amended): The system of claim 62, further comprising a search engine adapted to allow said ~~registered~~ food service professionals to search said databases.

Claim 76 (currently amended): A program storage device readable by machine for tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said machine to perform a method of facilitating food service management in a health care facility, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a computer-based system;

establishing a standard set of therapeutic diet types contained in a master diet type database in said system;

storing a plurality of food recipes in said system within a recipe database;

obtaining nutritional data on each food item used in said plurality of recipes and storing said data in said system within a food item database;

evaluating a nutritional content of each food item;

verifying a nutritional value of each of said plurality of recipes in said recipe database;

assigning various food attributes to said recipes based upon said verified

nutritional values;

shaping menu sets of said recipes for each of said established therapeutic diet types in a menu database in said system based upon said assigned food attributes;

providing a remote link to food service professionals associated with said healthcare facility to access said system;

collecting information from said ~~registered~~ food service professionals;

suggesting menu sets to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals ~~based upon therapeutic diet types selected by said registered food service professionals~~;

making nutritional information associated with said menu sets available to said ~~registered~~ food service professionals; and

tracking an inventory of food items at said health care facility.